

Trauma & Orthopaedics

Shoulder injection

Anatomy of the shoulder

The shoulder is made up of three bones called the shoulder blade (scapula), collarbone (clavicle) and the long bone of the arm (humerus). It also includes number of ligaments and tendons. The joint is crisscrossed by a network of nerves that transmit the pain signals and sensations from the shoulder to the brain.

What causes your chronic shoulder pain?

As we age, joints, like the shoulder joints, are exposed to constant wear and tear that the body is unable to repair, resulting in joints getting worse or osteoarthritis. Other common causes of chronic shoulder pain include shoulder injuries and post-operative shoulder pain.

What is a shoulder injection?

It is a minimally invasive procedure aimed at interrupting the pain signals sent to the brain, bringing you relief from pain. Injecting local anesthetics combined with a steroid can break this cycle long enough to help you move around and stay healthy and active.

Benefits of a shoulder injection

The injection can give lasting pain relief. If it works, it indicates that you may benefit from a subsequent radiofrequency ablation (burning) of the shoulder nerves. Radiofrequency ablation can result in an even more prolonged improvement in your symptoms compared to the local anesthetic and steroid injection.



Side effects of the injection

Possible side effects include:

- Localised hematoma
- Stiffness
- Infection
- Hospital-acquired infection
- Allergic reaction
- Skin depigmentation
- Steroid side effects
- Unresolved problems
- Neuro-vascular damage

What should you expect?

The procedure is done under local anesthesia. This means that you can eat and drink before the procedure. **You do not need to stop any medication before the procedure.** You will be able to go home on the same day.

Before the procedure

- **Diabetes:** If you are diabetic, we will check your blood sugar level on the day of the procedure, as steroids may raise it after.
- **Warfarin:** If you are on regular Warfarin, your INR level will need to be checked, as it may increase the risk of bleeding at the injection site.
- **Health status:** You must be in good health, without any fever and not taking antibiotics for at least 2 weeks before the procedure.

After the procedure:

- Post-operative care and following your doctor or specialist practitioner's instructions are very important for your recovery and achieving long-lasting results. You can eat and drink after the procedure.
- **We do not recommend driving yourself after the procedure. Please arrange for someone to drive you home.**
- It is also important to avoid heavy or strenuous activity for 48 hours after your injection. Allow yourself time to rest and recover.

Patient Information

- You can resume your usual diet on the same day and return to regular levels of activity the day after.
- Minor swelling can be treated with ice and pain killers as needed.
- A follow up appointment will be arranged for you around 6 to 8 weeks after the procedure.

Please do not forget your pain diary.

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